



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



January 16, 2009

Counter-Piracy and Combined Task Force 151

“Because of the complexity of operations, I determined it was necessary to establish CTF-151 – a taskforce with a mission and a mandate from the U.N. to conduct counter-piracy operations throughout the area of responsibility. Those nations that are seeking authorities to conduct these operations will bring their collective capabilities to bear to deter, disrupt and eventually bring to justice the maritime criminals involved in the piracy events.”

– Vice Adm. Bill Gortney, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command

Combined Task Force 151 has been established to deter, disrupt and suppress piracy in support of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1851, protect the global maritime environment, enhance maritime security and secure freedom of navigation for all nations. CTF 151 is a multinational task force that conducts counter-piracy operations in and around the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and the Red Sea and was created to provide a lawful maritime order and develop security in the maritime environment. Countering irregular and transnational threats such as piracy keeps the Sea Lines of Communication open and protects our homeland, enhances global stability and secures freedom of navigation for the benefit of all nations.

Cooperating to deter acts of piracy

- The U.S. Navy can't be everywhere. It would take an estimated 61 ships to control the internationally-designated shipping route, which is only a fraction of the 1.1 million square miles where pirates have attacked.
- A multi-national effort has emerged as a response to the call for an international solution. Coalition forces work in conjunction with navies from China, India, Russia and the European Union to deconflict responses throughout the maritime environment.
- In August, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command directed the establishment of a Maritime Security Patrol Area in the Gulf of Aden. A force of coalition Navy warships and aircraft patrols the area. Coalition efforts are designed to give the international community time to work preventative efforts that will ultimately lead to a long-term solution.
- Commercial shippers have been successful using non-kinetic measures including lookouts, speed and evasive maneuvering to prevent their vessels from being pirated.

U.S. Navy efforts to deter and thwart piracy

- The U.S. Navy will function as part of a larger international endeavor combining efforts of governments, militaries and maritime industry to stop piracy on the high seas.
- The Navy is engaged with international, interagency and coalition efforts to forge the necessary policy and legal mechanisms for deterring piracy.
- Piracy will not be solved at sea; its resolution must be found ashore. The U.S. Navy's role rests in encouraging and contributing to regional naval alliances and international cooperation designed to counter-piracy.

Key Messages

- The establishment of CTF 151 designates a task force to focus solely on the counter-piracy mission.
- The problem of piracy is and continues to be a problem that begins ashore and is an international problem that requires an international solution.
- CTF 151 is a multinational task force that conducts counter-piracy operations in and around the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and the Red Sea and was established to create a lawful maritime order and develop security in the maritime environment.

Facts & Figures

2009 Daily Piracy Events Snapshot in NAVCENT AOR

- 16 piracy events
- 2 successful (12% of the events)
- 14 unsuccessful (88% of the events)
- 11 ships currently pirated
- Approx. 210 merchant mariners being held hostage

2008 Piracy Events Summary in NAVCENT AOR

- Estimated 23,000 ships transit the Gulf of Aden annually
- 122 piracy events (0.5% of overall traffic)
- 42 successful (0.2% overall / 38% of the events)
- 80 unsuccessful (62% of the events)